



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

PYGMY-LEGENDS IN JEWISH LITERATURE

BY SOLOMON T. H. HURWITZ, New York.

IN view of the more recent developments in the anthropological world, the question of the wide distribution of races of pygmies or dwarfs (the terms are synonymous) in the early periods of human history has constantly been in the foreground. Since the able monograph of Quatrefages¹ much further light has been thrown on the subject through the labours of such scholars as Von Luschan,² MacRitchie,³ Paul Schmidt,⁴ and others.⁵ Not only is the evidence of travellers who have observed and conversed with the members of still living races of paramount importance,⁶

¹ Cf. *Les Pygmées* (Paris: J. B. Baillière et Fils, 1890) and *The Pygmies* . . . translated by F. Starr (London: Macmillan, 1895).

² Cf. *Zeitschr. für Ethnologie* (Berlin, 1913), XLVI, 939-45; and *id.*, XXXVIII, 716-30, *et passim*.

³ Cf. 'Zwerge in Geschichte und Ueberlieferung' in *Globus*, LXXXII, 101-3; *Journal Roy. Soc. Antiq. Ireland*, III, 367, *et passim*.

⁴ Cf. *Die Stellung der Pygmäenvölker in der Entwicklungsgeschichte des Menschen* (Stuttgart: Strecker & Schröder, 1910).

⁵ For further literature on the subject, cf. Picard, 'Les Pygmées' (*Science sociale*, XXVII, 203-26, 333-52, and XXVIII, 141-62); Emil Schmidt in *Globus*, LXXXVII, 309-12, 325-29; Guiffrida Ruggeri in *Archivio per l'antrop. e la etnol.* (Firenze, 1910), XL, 289-315, and in *Soc. italiana per il progresso delle scienze* (Roma, 1911), Atti IV, 495-519.

⁶ Cf. Burrows, *The Land of the Pygmies*. With introduction by H. W. Stanley (New York: T. Y. Crowell & Co., 1898); Neuhaus, 'Die Pygmäen in Deutsch-Neuguinea' (*Anthrop. Gesellsch. in Wien*, XLVII, 67-9), and 'Ueber Pygmäen in Niederländisch-Süd-Neu-Guinea' (*Zeitschr. für Ethnologie*, XLV, 23-44); Seiler, 'Von den Zwergstämmen in Südkamerun' (*Deutsche Gesellsch. für Anthrop., Ethnol. und Urgeschichte. Correspondenz.*

but the skeletal remains of earlier periods of civilization have afforded much ground to the student of comparative anatomy for the belief in the existence of such races in various parts of Europe during neolithic times.⁷ But a still greater amount of evidence lies embedded in the literary deposits of former generations which, whether in the form of myth or legend, folk-lore or fairy-tale, can be proven to be, if correctly interpreted, of great value for the better understanding of the subject.

The Greek and Roman writers of antiquity (notably Homer, Herodotus, Aristotle, Ctesias, Pliny, and Pomponius Mela) have preserved many legends about various races of African and Asiatic pygmies, which, when properly analysed,⁸ agree with the main facts brought to light by contemporary travellers who have, from time to time, explored their unfrequented abodes. Very little has been written on the occasional mention of dwarfs in the literary records of the two most ancient peoples of antiquity, the Egyptians and Jews,⁹ a consideration of whose accounts

blatt, XXXV, 3-6); and Schlaginhaufen, 'Pygmäen in Melanesien' (*Archives suisses d'anthropologie générale*, Genève, 1914, Tome I, 37-42).

⁷ Cf. Dor, 'Les Pygmées néolithiques en Suisse' (*Bull. soc. d'anthrop. de Lyon*, XXII, 170-77); Mesch, 'Neuer Fund von Pygmäen aus der neolithischen Zeit' (*Anzeiger für schweizer. Alterthumskunde*, n. s., II, 1-3); Thilenius, 'Prähistorische Pygmäen in Schlesien' (*Globus*, LXXXI, 273-4); and Kollmann, 'Pygmäen in Europa und Amerika' (*Ibid.*, 325-7).

⁸ For a discussion of their value, cf. Quatrefages, *op. cit.*, chapter I; Paul Monceaux (*Revue historique*, 1891, XLVII, 1-64); and Tyson, *A philological essay concerning the pygmies of the ancients...* edited, with an introduction treating of pygmy-races and fairy-tales, by B. C. A. Windle (London: D. Nutt, 1894).

⁹ A paper was presented on the subject before the last congress of anthropologists convened at Geneva, September 1912, by David MacRitchie in collaboration with the present writer, a summary of which appeared in the transactions (cf. D. MacRitchie et Salomon T. H. Hurwitz, 'Les Pygmées

cannot but be of supreme interest to the student of the problem.

But apart from its general interest the subject has a specific Jewish interest, in that it raises the problem of the value of the Jewish legend for the student of ethnology, folk-lore, and other kindred branches of anthropological science. In the following the subject will be treated under its three different aspects: (*a*) the legend about the Gammādīm and pygmy race of Kaftōrīm; (*b*) legends about individuals of dwarfed stature; (*c*) Greek legends in Rabbinic literature.

(a) THE GAMMĀDĪM AND KAFTŌRĪM.

The supposition that the Biblical writers knew of the existence of a race of pygmies rests entirely upon the traditional interpretation of the word גִּמְדִים in Ezek. 27. 11. The passage occurs in the second Tyrian prophecy; and some modern commentators, notably Jahn,¹⁰ regard it as a somewhat later gloss. The passage reads : בָּנֵי אַרְוַד וְחִילָה עַל-חוֹמוֹתָיו כְּבִיב וְנִפְזִים בְּמִגְדָּלוֹתָיו הָיוּ שְׁלִטָּיהֶם תָּלוּ עַל-חוֹמוֹתָיו כְּבִיב הָפִיחַ בְּלָלוֹ יָפִיעַ . The R.V. renders : ‘The men of Arvad with thine army were upon thy walls round about, and the Gammādīm were in thy towers; they hanged their shields upon thy walls round about; they have perfected thy beauty.’ A marginal note in the R.V. to *Gammādīm* renders ‘valorous men’. This rests entirely on the assumption that the word is to be derived from a secondary

chez les anciens Égyptiens et les Hébreux', *Congrès international d'anthropologie et d'archéologie préhistoriques*; Compte rendu de la xiv^{me} Session, Genève, 1912, II, 418-22). There is a brief discussion of the Biblical *Gammādīm* in the work of Tyson, *op. cit.*, pp. 68-70, and in the *JE*, V, 22-3.

¹⁰ Cf. *Das Buch Ezechiel*, ad loc. (Leipzig: E. Pfeifer, 1905).

sense of the Semitic נמר 'to be bold', found in the Syriac ܢܡܪܐ 'boldness, temerity', and occasionally in the Arabic جَمَد 'to be rigid, inexorable'—a supposition which is highly improbable. The word has caused much difference of opinion. The LXX renders φύλακες 'watchmen', while the Peshitto has ܢܡܪܐ 'watching'. In both cases the translators read שמרים, which may be translated either as noun or as participle. Symmachus read ܢܡܪܐ, ἀλλὰ καὶ Μῆδοι; Theodotion, καὶ Γομαδεῖμ; while the Vulgate adopts the Rabbinic tradition¹¹ and translates 'Pygmaei'—a translation borne out by Aquila, who renders πυγμαῖοι.¹² Modern commentators prefer to regard this perplexing word as a proper name (inasmuch as it is found in conjunction with other proper names, as e.g. Persia . . . Lud . . . Phut . . . Arvad), and read either with Lagarde נמרִים¹³ (cf. נִמְרִי, Gen. 10. 2-3), or with Cornill צמרים¹⁴ (cf. *ibid.*, 10. 18), or attempt to identify the masoretic נִמְרִים with the Egyptian Ḳamdu (or Gamdu), the Ḳumidi of the Tell Amarna inscriptions, and the modern Kāmid-el-Lōz.¹⁵

The Rabbinic tradition, however, has consistently looked upon the Gammādīm as a race of dwarfs. Not only does the rendition of Aquila confirm this position, but the united evidence of Targum and Midrash, as well as the remarks of the most esteemed older commentators of the O.T. bear out this view to its fullest. Rashi, after expressing

¹¹ It is well known that Jerome sat at the feet of Jewish doctors of the Law.

¹² Cf. Origen's *Hexapla* (ed. Field), *ad loc.* Origen gives another version of Aquila which renders τετελεσμένοι, but the first is, no doubt, the authentic version.

¹³ Cf. *Onomastica Sacra* (2nd edition), 367.

¹⁴ Cf. Kraetzschmar, *Das Buch Ezechiel*, *ad loc.*

¹⁵ Cf. Ernest Meyer, *Aegyptiaca*, 72, and Max Müller, *Asien und Europa*, 193, 396 (Leipzig: W. Engelmann, 1893).

the opinion of Rabbi Menahem (bar Ḥelbō), who renders the word 'divers', adds—אמה—ונכנסין במרת אמה—'Others explain that they are pygmies who are a cubit high in measure.' The last words give the philological ground for this exegesis; for, it will be remembered, that גַּמָּד is a 'cubit' (cf. Judg. 3. 16).¹⁶ The word גַּמָּד is accordingly analogous, from the Rabbinic standpoint, to the Greek *πυγμαῖος*, 'a foot tall'. Kīmhī speaks similarly: אנשים ננסים, 'The Gammādīm were a pygmy people of small stature. The word is to be derived from the expression "of a cubic length" in Judges (*ibid.*). But it was the French exegete, Eliezer of Beaugency, a pupil of Rabbi Samuel ben Meīr, who first correctly identified this tradition with the legend concerning the pygmy race of Kaftōrīm recorded in the Midrash Rabba. He says: וגמדים עם ננום הוא כמפורש בבראשית רבה (פרשה ל"ז סי' ה') כפתורים ננסים, ובארץ יון יש מהם הרבה¹⁷ ובעלי חצים הן והוא שאומר שלטיהם 'The Gammādīm are a pygmy people, as it is explained in Genesis rabba (37. 5)—"The Kaftōrīm were dwarfs". There are many such in Greece, and they are good archers, wherefore it is said, "they hanged their *šlāṭīm* upon thy walls" (Ezek. 27. 11); the *šlāṭīm* are quivers.'

Poznański points out¹⁸ that the identification with the

¹⁶ The primary sense of the Semitic גַּמָּד is 'to curtail, contract, congeal' (cf. Arabic جَمَدَ); the etymology of 'dwarf', from the root itself, is, therefore, quite possible without resorting to its derivation from גַּמָּד.

¹⁷ Pliny, in one account (*Natural History*, I, 18), places the pygmies in Thrace and Ctesias (*Ecloga in Photii Bibl.* LXXII, p. 145) claims that they were good archers (σφόδρα γὰρ εἰσι τοξόται). It would seem, therefore, that the Rabbi was acquainted with the Greek legends of pygmies which, as will be seen, are not unknown in mediaeval Rabbinic literature.

¹⁸ Cf. S. Poznański, פירוש על יחזקאל ותרי עשר לרבי אליעזר מבלנצי, (חברת מקיצי נרדמים: ורשא 1909-10).

passage in בראשית רבה is absolutely correct. Targum Jonathan translates the word גַּמְדִּים = קַפְּטֹקַי 'Cappadocians'; and, as Poznański has shown on another occasion (*ZAW.*, XXIV, 305), the Kaftōrīm are always termed Cappadocians in the geographical identifications of the Targumim.¹⁹ The inference that the Gammādīm were regarded by the Rabbis as identical with the Kaftōrīm is, therefore, entirely legitimate.

The legend, as recorded in Genesis rabba 37. 5, bears the stamp of age and has been generally misunderstood by the commentators because of the occurrence of several ἀπαξ λεγόμενα. It is a comment on Gen. 10. 14, which contains the genealogical tree of the nations descended from the stock of the Egyptians. ואת פתרוסים ואת כסלוחים, 'And Pathrusim, and Casluhim, out of whom came the Philistines, and Caphtorim.' On this the Midrash comments as follows: פתרוסים פרויטות כסלוחים פקוסים, אמר רבי אבא בר כהנא פתרוסים וכסלוחים היו מעמידין אוטליסין היו אלו מנגבין נשותיהן של אלו, מה יצא מהן, פלשתים גבורים כפתורים ננסים.²⁰ Although most authorities²¹ regard the words

¹⁹ Rabbi Menaḥem bar Ḥelbo similarly identifies the גַּמְדִּים with the כַּפְּתוֹרִים, although he interprets the first word as 'divers' (cf. Poznański, פתרוני ר' מנחם בר חלבו לכתבי הקדש, בספר היוכל לכבוד נחום סאקאלאו, (ורשא תרס"ד, דף 421). For כפתור as Cappadocia, cf. Onkelos to Deut. 2. 23, and Jonathan to Jer. 47. 4, Amos 9. 7. The Peshitto agrees with the Targumim in these passages, and renders ܡܦܬܪܝܡ; while the LXX similarly render Καππαδοκία, Καππάδοκες.

²⁰ Parallel passages are found in the Yalkūt to Gen. 10. 14, and to 1 Chron. I. 12. Both quotations omit the first line of the passage. The Genesis reference is interesting because of its translation of the word פתרוסים, which probably belonged at the beginning of the passage, and which accords with the view expressed in the present article. The passage reads: פתרוסים וכסלוחים היו מעמידין הטליסין והיו אלו מנגבין נשותיהן של אלו ואלו מנגבין נשותיהן של אלו מה יצאו מהן, פלשתים גבורים, פתרוסים גנבים, כפתורים ננסים (ילקוט לבראשית " י"ד).

²¹ So Levy (*Neuhebräisches und chaldäisches Wörterbuch, ad loc.*), Kohut

פרויטות and פקוסים as proper names of unknown Egyptian tribes, still the commentary ascribed to Rashi and of late Theodor²² correctly surmise from the context that these are descriptive terms employed to explain the character of the intermingling races from whom Philistines and Kaftōrīm sprung. The word פרויטות (for which the Paris MS. reads פרויטות²³) is, as Neubauer has already shown,²³ the Greek *πειρατής* 'pirate'; while the word פקוסים, although hitherto unexplained, seems to be phonologically identical with the Greek *πῆχυς*, another name for pygmies.²⁴ The passage accordingly means: The Pathrūsīm are pirates; the Kaslūhīm are pygmies. Says Rabbi Abba bar Kahana, 'The Pathrūsīm and Kaslūhīm were wont to hold bazaars (Greek *κατάλυσσις*), on which occasion one tribe would steal the women of the other tribe. With what result? Philistines—giants;²⁵ Kaftōrīm—dwarfs'.

An intelligent examination of this passage, drawn from the ancient store-house of Jewish folk-lore, makes clear an attempt on the part of the learned Rabbi Abba bar Kahana to reconcile two conflicting traditions transmitted from a remote antiquity concerning the Philistine aborigines; on ערוך השלם, *ad loc.*), and Wünsche (*Bibliotheca Rabbinica; Eine Sammlung alter Midraschim*, Leipzig, 1880-85, *ad loc.*).

²² Cf. Theodor, מדרש בראשית רבא (Berlin, 1908-14), *ad loc.*

²³ Cf. *La Géographie du Talmud* (Paris, 1868), p. 424. The form פרויטות (nearest to *πειρατής*) may be a case of vocalic metathesis due to the accent on the ultima (cf. Krauss, *Griechische und lateinische Lehnwörter im Talmud, Midrasch, und Targum*, Berlin, 1898, I, p. 115).

²⁴ Lucian, *Rhet. Praec.* 6, speaks of *πῆχες* on paintings of the Nile, described as pygmies. Philostratus also uses this word for pygmies. The Greek *χ* is often transliterated by *q* in Rabbinic literature (cf. קרטים for *χάρτης*, קולייך for *χέλειον*, קירקני for *χορικόν* in Nedārīm 51 a).

²⁵ Cf. בראשית השם (Gen. 6. 4) המה הגבורים אשר מעולם אינני הישם ו' רבה כ"ו ו' where the expression גבורים is reckoned among the seven Biblical names for giant-races.

the one hand, a tradition that the Philistines belonged in great part to a giant race—a tradition still surviving in the Biblical stories of the giant Goliath, and the children of the רפה of Gath (2 Sam. 21. 16–22); and on the other hand, a tradition concerning a race of pygmies known as Kaftōrīm, also said to be the progenitors of the Philistines (cf. Deut. 2. 23; Jer. 47. 4; and Amos 9. 7). The reconciliation assumes that the later Kaftōrīm and Philistines were the products of two earlier, intermingling races of diverse character (one of pygmies, the other of pirates) out of whom sprung the giants and dwarfs known to tradition. But inasmuch as the Genesis account derives all these tribes from a common Egyptian ancestry, the conclusion is not at all surprising; for the Rabbis may have been acquainted (as the Greek words seem to indicate) with various widely-circulated stories about African pirates and Egyptian pygmies.²⁶

This is perhaps among the earliest instances of an attempt to explain several conflicting legends, belonging in greater part to the domain of folk-lore, in a manner somewhat closely resembling modern scientific methods. The question that now arises is, how are these curious traditions of antiquity to be interpreted in the light of our present knowledge? The problem of the tall, non-Semitic autochthons of Palestine has, to a large extent, been solved by the late archaeological excavations which have brought to light traces of tall, non-Semitic races in various parts of Palestine in prehistoric periods of human culture.²⁷ There

²⁶ In the Greek legends the pygmies are most often associated with Ethiopia and the sources of the Nile (cf. note 24; Aristotle, *Hist. Animal.* VIII, 12; Philostratus, *De Vita Apollon. Tyanaei*, VI, 1; and Herodotus, *Histor.* IV, 183).

²⁷ Cf. Macalister, *History of Civilization in Palestine* (Cambridge, 1912), pp. 20 ff., and Kittel, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel* (Gotha, 1912), I, 32–46.

is, therefore, little difficulty in accounting for the semi-fabulous Refā'im, 'Anāḳīm, Zamzummīm, and 'Ēmīm, cited by the Deuteronomist (2. 10-23), and it is not surprising that similar accounts have been transmitted of the Philistines, who may possibly have absorbed the small remnants of these early aborigines during their invasion. But more difficult is the question involved in the other tradition, which distinctly claims that the Kaftōrīm were a race of dwarfs.

This leads at once to the ethnographic problem of the identity of the Kaftōrīm. The Rabbinic conjecture with regard to Cappadocia, based on the similarity of sound in the two names, has nothing further in its favour. Michaelis²⁸ very early expressed the opinion that Cyprus was the original 'isle of Kaftōr' spoken of by the prophet (Jer. 47. 4); while Ebers²⁹ tried to prove that the coast of the Nile-Delta was the site referred to. Hitzig³⁰ identified the Philistines with the Pelasgians, who came from Crete to northern Egypt, whence they emigrated to Palestine (this seems to be borne out by the genealogy in Gen. 10. 14). Most modern authorities,³¹ however, are unanimously in favour of Crete as the original seat of the Kaftōrīm. The fact that the name כְּרִתִּים is applied to the Philistines on several occasions (cf. Ezek. 25. 16; Zeph. 2. 5; and 1 Sam. 30. 14), and the identification of כַּפְתֹּר with the Keftiu of the Egyptian monuments³² makes this position

²⁸ Cf. Gesenius-Brown-Driver, *Hebrew Lexicon*, to כַּפְתֹּר.

²⁹ Cf. *Aegypten und die Bücher Moses* (Leipzig, 1868), pp. 127 ff.

³⁰ Cf. *Urgeschichte und Mythologie der Philistiner* (Leipzig, 1845), pp. 33 ff.

³¹ Cf. A. J. Evans, *Cretan Pictographs* (1895), p. 100. Similarly, H. Ewald, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel* (2^{te} Auflage, Göttingen, 1851), I, 330 ff.; Dillmann, *Die Genesis* (Leipzig, 1882, 4^{te} Auflage), p. 179; and Giesebrecht, *Das Buch Jeremia* (Göttingen, 1894), p. 234.

³² Cf. Macalister, *The Philistines* (London, 1913), ch. I.

almost certain. Macalister³³ concludes that 'the Philistines were a people composed of several septs, derived from Crete and the south-west corner of Asia Minor. Their civilization, probably, was derived from Crete, and though there was a large Carian element in their composition,³⁴ they may fairly be said to have been the people who imported with them to Palestine the memories and traditions of the great days of Minos'.

From what is known of Crete, its high degree of culture, and its influence on the ancient world, there can be no question as to any possible relationship between the Cretan Kaftōrīm and the pygmy race of the Rabbinic tradition. As far as the latter is concerned, one possible solution of the problem has suggested itself to the present writer. In the late excavations of the site of ancient Gezer, Macalister³⁵ informs us of the discovery of the remains of a curious non-Semitic race of troglodytes who lived in neolithic times (*c.* 2500 B. C.), and who were considerably below the average stature. While it is true that these were not a dwarfed race in the true sense of the word,³⁶ yet the fact

³³ Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 28.

³⁴ The royal body-guard, besides being composed of the כְּרִיתֵי וּפְלִשְׁתֵּי (2 Sam. 8. 18), Cretans and Philistines (so Macalister, *loc. cit.*), is also said, on several occasions, to have contained הַכַּרְיִי, Carians (cf. 2 Sam. 20. 23; 2 Kings 11. 4, 19). The Carians, together with the Philistines (identified by Macalister with the Pulsati of the monuments), were small bands of sea-pirates who overran Palestine. This fact rather curiously confirms the opinion of the Rabbis.

³⁵ Cf. *Excavation of Gezer* (London, 1912), I, 72.

³⁶ Roughly speaking, the average height of males of dwarfed races is 4 ft. 9 in. (the height of a twelve year old boy), although individuals of full-grown estate have been known to be considerably below 4 ft. in stature. The average height of the troglodytes of Gezer was about 5 ft. 1 in. When we recall that tall races reach an average of 5 ft. 9 in., the difference in height becomes at once remarkably striking.

that only few of the caves were much beyond six feet in height ³⁷ would seem to indicate that the race in question was considerably shorter than the other aboriginal races known to have lived in the surrounding parts, who, to say the least, belonged to the tall races of mankind.

It is true Macalister is strongly disinclined to accept the present theory,³⁸ partly because of the large gap in time between the neolithic troglodytes and the Cretan Kaftōrīm, who are a comparatively late importation—*c.* 1400–1200 B. C.—and partly because of scepticism as to the value of the Rabbinic tradition about pygmies. Nevertheless, when we remember the persistence of old traditions in the folk-lore of the human race, and when we recall that the later Kaftōrīm settled over the very graves of the former troglodytes (having, according to Deut. 2. 23, displaced the 'Avvīm, who are said to have dwelt in villages as far as Gaza, and who are known, from Joshua 13. 3, to have still survived during the invasion of the Israelites), it is not altogether unlikely that stories of the large discrepancies in the height of several autochthonous races—a fact very striking to the primitive mind—should cling to the localities wherein these indigenous races originally dwelt, long after their extinction. MacRitchie has similarly interpreted ³⁹ the curious legends about fians, fairies, and Picts in Scotch and English folk-lore, and his conclusions have been lately

³⁷ Cf. Macalister, *History of Civilization in Palestine*, pp. 12–13.

³⁸ In a letter of Sept. 16, 1914, to Mr. David MacRitchie, Prof. Macalister says: 'I should be inclined to doubt very strongly (*a*) the interpretation of *Gammādīm* as "pigmy", and (*b*) their equation to Caphtōrīm. . . The Caphtōrīm are altogether a late importation, and cannot, in my opinion, be equated to the neolithic people found at Gezer. The latter were a small, but not a pygmy people—say 5 ft. to 5 ft. 3 in. or so.'

³⁹ Cf. *The Testimony of Tradition* (London, 1890); *Fians, Fairies, and Picts* (London, 1893).

verified through an accumulation of evidence from various sources. For want of more light on the early history of Palestine, the present theory is quite sufficient to explain the appearance of giants and dwarfs in connexion with Philistine aborigines in the folk-lore of the early Hebrews.

(b) LEGENDS ABOUT INDIVIDUALS OF DWARFED STATURE.

The individual of dwarfed stature in non-dwarfed races is reckoned among nature's prodigies. As such, he is numbered with other abnormalities as a subject for the special blessing, ברוך משנה הבריות, 'Blessed is He who varies the form of His creatures', which was usually pronounced upon beholding a freak of nature (Berakot 88 b). In order to prevent a possible perpetuation of his abnormality the dwarf was forbidden to marry a woman similarly abnormal—ננס—ננס, 'לא ישא גבוהית שמא יצא מהן תורן', 'An abnormally tall man should not marry an abnormally tall woman lest they beget giant (lit. mast-like) progeny; while a dwarf should not marry a female dwarf lest they beget thumb-like offspring (Bekorot 45 b).' His abnormality makes him unfit for the performance of priestly duty (cf. Mishnah Bekorot 45 b). This prohibition originates, in the opinion of some of the commentators, from the injunction in Lev. 21. 20, which in the words of the A.V. counts among the unfit for the priesthood, 'a crookbackt, or a dwarf, or that hath a blemish in his eye' (או נבן או דק או תבלל בעינו). The translation is supported by Ibn Ezra and the Peshitto, although other authorities of importance render it differently.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ The LXX renders 'blear-eyed'—an opinion also upheld by the Vulgate, Saadia, and Rashi. Targum Yerushalmi gives both opinions.

The following interesting tale is used as a *משל* in Genesis rabba 65, 11 and Cant. rabba 2, 15. A dwarf, whose mother curiously named him Macroelafros (*μακρο-ελαφρός*), 'Fleet-footed Giant', was refused admission into the king's service because of deficiency in height. To his mother's earnest plea on his behalf the king very appropriately replied: 'If in thy eyes he is a fleet-footed giant, in our eyes he is naught but a dwarf of dwarfs' (אם בעיניך (מקרואלפרוס בעינינו הוא ננס שבננסים).

But most curious is the humorous description of Pharaoh which the Rabbis have transmitted to us in Moed Katan 18a : ואמר אביטול ספרא משמיה דרב, פרעה שהיה בימי משה הוא אמה וקנו אמה ופרמשתקו אמה וורת לקיים מה שנאמר, ושפל אנשים יקים עליה, 'Says Abital, the scribe, on the authority of Raf : "The Pharaoh of the days of Moses was a cubit [in height], his beard was a cubit, and his membrum virile was a cubit and a span", so that the text may be fulfilled—"He setteth up over it the basest of men" (Dan. 4. 17).'

The parallel passage in the Yalkūt to Dan. 4. 14 (besides omitting the ורת from the latter part) adds: ד"א זה נבוכדנאצר 'Others explain that this refers to Nebuchadnezzar, the dwarf, who was a hand-breadth in size.' The description is especially interesting in view of what Ctesias relates⁴¹ in his famous account of Indian dwarfs. He says: 'In the middle of India there are black men who are called pygmies. . . . They are very little, the tallest of them being but two cubits, and most of them but a cubit and a half high. They have very long hair, reaching down to their knees and lower, and a beard

⁴¹ Mr. MacRitchie first called attention to this curious parallel in the two accounts in an article on 'Egyptian and Jewish Pygmies' in the *Glasgow Herald*. This was reprinted in the *Hebrew Standard* of June 8, 1914.

larger than any human beings. After their beards are grown long they wear no clothes, but the hair of their head falls behind them much below their hams, and that of their beards in front comes down to their feet. . . . Their membrum virile is so long that it reaches to the ankle' (*loc. cit.*; and Tyson, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-4).⁴² It is quite likely that various exaggerated descriptions of dwarfs (of the Ctesias's type) reached the Rabbis through some hitherto unknown sources. The contention of Kohler (*JE.*, V, 23) that the Rabbis identified either Pharaoh or Nebuchadnezzar with the image of a grotesque Egypto-Arabic idol, probably Bes, struck on the coins of the Ptolemies, has, accordingly, little in its favour.

The fact is, several passages in midrashic literature refer to Nebuchadnezzar as 'the dwarf of Babel', who, as the Yalkūṭ passage explicitly states, was said to be but a hand-breadth in height. The last statement is inferred, according to the Rabbinic interpretation, from Dan. 4. 14, 'he setteth up over it the basest of men'. In Genesis rabba 16. 4, Theodor (*op. cit.*) correctly inserts the following passage (which has been omitted in the regular editions of the Midrash, but is found in manuscripts, and is to be inferred from the quotation in the commentary ascribed to Rashi *ad loc.*): שם האחד פישון זו בבל על שם ופשו פרשיו ועל שם ננסא⁴³ קורטא (curtus), 'The name of one was Pishon—this is Babylon, so-called because of what the prophet said—"Their horsemen shall spread themselves (*pāšū*)

⁴² In view of the coincidence in these two descriptions of dwarfs, the clever emendation of Kohut (ערוך השלם ע' פרמשתק), in which he translates: 'Pharaoh was a cubit, his grandparent (זקנו) a cubit, and the tallest [of his kin] (Sanskrit *prameshta*) a cubit and a span', loses its value.

⁴³ Cf. Theodor, *op. cit.*, *ad loc.*; Kohut, *op. cit.*, ע' קורטא; Buber, *Pesiḳta derab Kahana*, 112; and Friedmann, *Pesiḳta rabbeti*, 31, 4.

(Hab. 1. 8) " and also because of the little dwarf, a hand-breadth (*puškā*) in size.' Similarly, the Levites complain (Friedmann, *Pesiḳta rabbeti*, 31. 4): לא דיינו שהחרבנו : בית מקדשו בעונותינו אלא עבשיו אנו עומדים להקיש בכנורותינו לפני ; הננס הזה : 'Not enough that the temple was destroyed for our sins, but we are now compelled to strike our harps before this dwarf', while on another occasion (Buber, *Pesiḳta derab Kahana*, 112) it is said,⁴⁴ כך אמר הק"ב מה דעביר לי 'ננסא דבבל' Although the origin of this curious tradition is obscure, yet these various ludicrous descriptions of the conqueror of Jerusalem seem to be largely expressions of contempt indulged in by the Rabbis.

(c) GREEK PYGMY-LEGENDS IN MEDIAEVAL RABBINIC LITERATURE.

The references to dwarfs in the Rabbinic literature of the Middle Ages are mostly borrowed from late Greek sources. This is evident from the fact that three of these references employ the Greek word *πίθηξ* for the fabulous nation of pygmies. The word *πίθηξ*, which is identical with *πίθηκος*, and has the meaning of 'ape' in some late authors, is also defined as 'dwarf' by Suidas,⁴⁵ a lexicographer of the tenth century. The earliest of the three sources to employ this word in connexion with pygmies is the Josippon, an anony-

⁴⁴ Brüll (*Jahrbücher für jüdische Geschichte und Literatur*, Frankfurt a. M., 1876, II, 210) believes that the word ננס used in these passages is the same as נאנא 'dog', but in view of what was herein set forth, this position is untenable.

⁴⁵ Cf. Bernhardt, *Suidas' Lexicon graece et latine*, III, 271, note. *πίθηξ δὲ παρά τισιν ὁ βραχὺς ἀνθρωπίσκος*. Bernhardt considers these words a later gloss.

mous work of the middle of the tenth century.⁴⁶ The other two sources are largely dependent on this work for some of their information, and may have borrowed the account of the pygmies from it. The Josippon partly consists of an Alexander romance borrowed from the work of Archpresbyter Leo's *Historia Alexandri magni, regis Macedoniae, de proeliis*, which, in turn, emanates, as all Alexandrian romances do, from the work of Pseudo-Callisthenes.

The Josippon tells the following about Alexander's visit to the land of the pygmies while on his way to India :

ויהי כאשר העביר אלכסנדר את כל הארץ תחתיו ויעבור מארץ מדי דרך
המדבר הנדו עם רבים מיושבי הארץ ההיא ויבואו עד בקעה עמוקה לרוב
וילכו בה ה' ימים וימצאו שם חיות משונות ופירות רבות וימצאו שם
אנשים הנקראים פיתיקוש⁴⁷ בלשון יון והם ננסים ויבקש לתפוש חיים ויברחו
וימיתו אנשיו מהם מאה ועשרים והם המיתו מאנשיו שלשה אנשים ויאכל
When Alexander had subdued the entire country, he passed from Media by way of the desert to India, accompanied by many inhabitants of those parts. They came to a very deep valley where they travelled for five days and found many remarkable animals and fruit. They also found a race of men known in Greek as "pitheces", and these were dwarfs. He attempted to capture them alive, but they fled. His men killed one hundred and twenty of them, while they killed three of his men. He ate the fruits of the place and passed the night there (Josippon, 2. 10).'

In another Alexander romance, ascribed to Samuel Ibn

⁴⁶ Cf. Steinschneider, *Jewish Literature* (London, 1857), p. 77; Zunz in the *Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela* (ed. A. Asher, London, 1841), II, 246; and Budge, *History of Alexander the Great, being the Syriac Version of Pseudo-Callisthenes* (Cambridge, 1889), p. lxxxiv.

⁴⁷ Gagnier, *Josippon sive Iosephi ben Gorionis historiae Iudaicae* (Oxonii, 1706), p. 69, renders: 'Pithaci seu simiae'.

Tibbon of the twelfth century, the manuscript of which is in the Bodleian,⁴⁸ and which also emanates from a translation of Archpresbyter Leo's *Historia*, a similar account occurs:

וראה שם חיות משונות ומצא אילנות דומות לתפוחים וירא שם אנשים הנקראים פיתיקו וצואריהם ארוכים וידיהם . . . ויצו לתפוש מהם וברחו 'He saw peculiar animals there and found trees like unto apple-trees, and saw a race of men known as "pitheco" whose necks were long and hands . . . He ordered them to be captured, but they fled after he had killed thirty-two of their number, while they killed one hundred of his men (*Kōbeš 'al Yad*, II, 76).'

Levy adds (*ibid.*) that this passage is not found in the work of Leon. It is quite evident, from the fact that the work of Ibn Tibbon draws at times from the Alexander narrative in the Josippon, that this passage was either adapted directly from the latter work, or, as is quite likely, was based on a translation of the original from which the Josippon drew.

Another more detailed account of the legend about the pygmies and their fabulous battle with the cranes is to be found in several Hebrew versions of the letters of Prester John, published by Neubauer.⁴⁹ Although the pygmies

⁴⁸ Cf. Steinschneider, *Catal.*, 2486.

⁴⁹ Cf. 12-68 קבץ על יד חלק רביעי צד, and Eisenstein, *Ozar Midrashim*, II, 467-73 (New York, 1915). The first letter is entitled

אגרת אשר שלח פיטרי גואן אל פרדליק קיסר של רומאה:

while the other is

כתב ששלח פרישטי יואן לאפיפיור ברומאה:

A critical examination of the linguistic peculiarities of the two translations shows clearly that they are based on French translations from Latin originals (e. g. the words דוקים וקונטים = ducs et comtes : אוגילו גריפוס =

are merely mentioned by name in the various Latin versions of the same letters published by Zarncke,⁵⁰ yet there can be no doubt that the fantastic description of the wonders of India, of which they, for the most part, consist, was borrowed from the various Alexander romances, which were frequently expanded by introducing well-known tales from Greek and Roman mythology. Of the several versions published by Neubauer the following is the most complete account of the pygmy-legend :

וסמוך לארץ הזאת יש אחת שקורין אותו⁵¹ פיקוניאה ואנשי הארץ הזאת הם קטנים כמו נערים משבעה שנים או שמונה וסוסיהם גדולים⁵² אבל הם נוצרים חשובים והם עובדים האדמה בשלוח שלא יש מי שיוזק להם בעבור שיושבים במקום שלא יוכל שום אדם לעבור בארצם. אבל באה עליהם בכל שנה קללה כשהם קוצרים וכשהם בוצרים באים עליהם ענין אחד מעופות ואוכלים את פרים וכשרואה מלך הארץ זה הולך עם אנשיו מזויינים להלחם עם אלו העופות ונותנים קולות ומבריחים אותם ממקומם וזה המלחמה. ושני חיי אלו האנשים מאתים שנה ושער וקניהם הוא לבן כל ימי חייהם וחקנם Near this land there is another called Pyconia whose inhabitants are of the size of small boys of seven or eight. Their horses, however, are large. They are indeed good Christians and till their ground quietly, inasmuch as there are none to do them harm ; for they dwell in a country inaccessible to human

l'aigle 'gryphus' : ריגולייא עון גואן = régal de St. Jean : גריפון = griffon : מיראיייל = merveille or miroir, &c.). גופריי = Godfrey : שאפיר = saphir : For a complete account see the vocabulary of foreign words compiled by the present writer in the work of Eisenstein, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 596-606.

⁵⁰ Cf. *Abhandlungen d. königl. sächsischen Gesellschaft d. Wissenschaften*, philolog.-histor. Klasse, VII, 911, *et passim*.

⁵¹ Epstein (אלרד הדני), p. 65, Pressburg, 1891) surmises that 'Pygmonia' was the original name, meaning 'Pygmy-land'.

⁵² The anonymous author here attempts to correct Aristotle, who positively asserts that their horses were small (Τένος μικρόν μὲν, καὶ αὐτοὶ καὶ οἱ ἵπποι, *Hist. Animal.* VIII, cap. 12).

being. But every year a curse overtakes them. At the time when they reap their harvest a certain species of birds assails them and consumes their fruits. And when the king of the country perceives this, he sets out with his men armed to fight these birds who, with cries, are driven off from their territory. Such is the battle. Their length of life is two hundred years, and the hair of their beards is white throughout their life-time—their beards coming down over their knees and the hair of the women over their feet (*Kōbes 'al Yad*, IV, 12).'

Finally, Judah Hadassi has a most faithful account of the battle of the cranes and the pygmies drawn from Greek sources in his large work *אשכל הכפר*.⁵³ The story is inserted in a catalogue of prodigies (e.g. the cynocephali, centaurs, &c.) much after the manner of the Josippon and the other Alexander romances, the use of which is further betrayed by the words *pitheces* and *pithecon* which are found in the narrative. Hadassi, however, has embellished the story with minute details of the fighting scene drawn from his own fertile imagination:

מִין פִּיתִיקוֹן בְּנֵי אֲמֹתִים וְטוֹפֵחַ שׁוֹכְנִים בְּמִקְוֹמוֹתָם בְּאַרְצוֹתֵיהֶם בְּמַלְכוּתָם
קָרֹב לְאַנֹּם גְּדוֹל בְּאָחוּ בְּבִיצָה וְכָל טוֹב בְּשֵׁם מְרוֹקָה, הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא מְבוֹשֵׁם
וּמְסוּמָם בְּכָל טוֹב בְּשֵׁם וּמְגִדִּיךְ: לְהַרְרֵיהֶם וּמַעֲרֻתֵיהֶם וּנְבִעוֹתֵיהֶם שׁוֹכְנִים
עוֹפוֹת גְּדוֹלוֹת מִיָּנִי נֶץ וּפֶרֶם וְעוֹנִיָּה, בְּעָלֵי אֶבֶר וְנוֹצָה וְכַפֵּץ וְגוֹבָה וְגִבּוֹרָה
מְגִדְלוֹת, וּפֶעַם אַחַת בְּשָׁנָה אֱלֹהֵי הָעוֹפוֹת מֵתְקַבְּצִים יוֹם אֶחָד וְלֹחֲמִים עִם
אֱלֹהֵי הַגְּמָדִים מִלְחָמָה גְּדוֹלָה עָדִי עָרֵב כְּמִלְחָמָתָךְ: כָּלִי קָרֵב חָרֵב וְחֹנִית
מִסַּע וְשָׂרִיָּה מַעֲרִיכִים וְשָׂרִיוֹן וְכוּבֵעַ לֹבָשִׁים אֱלֹהֵי אֲנָשִׁי פִּתִּיקוֹשׁ כְּאֲנָשִׁי
מִלְחָמָה גְּבוּרֵי חֵיל, מַחֲנֶה גְּדוֹר עוֹרֵכִים, וְטָרֶם בּוֹא זֶה יוֹם מִלְחָמָתָם כָּל
רְכוּשׁ בְּתֵיהֶם וְצֹאנָם וּבְקָרָם טָפִם וְנִשְׁיָהֶם מְטַמְּיָנִים בְּמַטְמוֹנֵי אֶרֶץ: יוֹם
אֶחָד נוֹדַע מִשָּׁנָה אֶל שָׁנָה וּמוֹמֵן לָהֶם מִיּוֹדְעֵי בֵּינָה יוֹשְׁבִים אֱלֹהֵי הָאֲנָשִׁים

⁵³ Eupatoria, 1829, 60 'Alphabet'. The work was begun in Constantinople in A.D. 1148.

מוכנים מעלות השחר מחכים המלחמה להתקוננה ובאור בקר יורדים אלו העופות עליהם ומכסים את עין ארצך: משים מעופפים עליהם ועורכים מלחמה אלה מול אלה עמהם העופות בצפרני רגליהם ובכנפיהם ובפיהם ואלה בחרבות ובחצים ומקל יד וברמח ומנן וכל כלי קרבך. . . ואיש אחד גבוה ורום קומה וגבור מבני קושטנדינא הגלתו ספינתו בגבול ארצם. . . 'A kind of "pithecōn" two cubits and a span dwell in their territories near a large lake, where fragrant spices abound. Near their hills there are to be found several species of large birds, winged and powerful. At a certain time in the year these birds gather and fight an all-day battle with these pygmies. These "pitheces" array themselves in various kinds of armor and draw up their lines like trained soldiers. But before the day of battle is on, they hide their wealth, women, and children. On the day fixed by those who know the calendar, they lie prepared to give battle and at dawn the birds descend covering the light of heaven. They fly at them and fight them with their nails and beaks while the men use all sorts of warlike implements to meet them. . . A certain tall and powerful individual of the people of Constantinople was shipwrecked in their country. . . ('Eškōl Hakkōfer, 60 "Alphabet").'

Epstein wrongly surmises⁵⁴ that this was a part of the Eldad Hadānī tale quoted just before this story, for 'the man of Constantinople' can have nothing to do with the traveller Eldad Hadānī.

⁵⁴ *op. cit.*, p. 65.